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Agenda item 86
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996, entitled "Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues", the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Palestine Arab refugees are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of justice and equity;
>
> "2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel and to preserve and modernize the existing records;
>
> "3. *Calls once more upon* Israel to render all facilities and assistance to the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "4. *Calls upon* all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel that would assist him in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "5. *Urges* the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues in the framework of the final status negotiations of the Middle East peace process;
>
> "6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 7 May 1997, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Government of Israel the text of General Assembly resolutions 51/124 to 51/130 of 13 December 1996, with the request that it inform him by 15 June 1997 of any steps it had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. Also on 7 May, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provision of resolutions 51/124 to 51/130, including paragraph 4 of resolution 51/129, and requesting information by 15 June 1997 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 28 July 1997 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 51/124 to 51/130. The text reads as follows:

> "Israel's position on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which

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being Israel's note verbale dated 3 May 1993. Israel regrets the fact that the resolutions regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remain rife with political issues irrelevant to the work for which UNRWA is responsible, and thus remain detached from the new reality in the area. Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolution 51/127 and voted against resolutions 51/124, 51/126, 51/128, 51/129 and 51/130.

"The agreements between Israel and the Palestinians mark significant progress in the framework of the peace process. Israel believes that this process is the only way to achieve historic reconciliation and lasting peace between the two sides. However, for this process to succeed, it is imperative that both sides abide by their commitments made under the agreements signed by them. Israel calls upon the Palestinian side to live up to its commitments and resume its participation in the negotiations on all outstanding interim matters and on permanent status issues.

"Israel believes that UNRWA can play an important role in promoting the social and economic advancement foreseen in the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, within the limits of its humanitarian mandate, and accordingly looks forward to continuing the cooperation and good working relationship with UNRWA.

"In the light of the above, Israel considers it essential that the General Assembly consolidate the resolutions regarding UNRWA into one resolution directly related to the Agency's humanitarian tasks. This would also be compatible with the necessity to rationalize the work of the General Assembly."

5. Earlier, on 6 March 1997, the Secretary of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had addressed a letter to the Chairman and members of the Commission bringing to their attention General Assembly resolution 51/129 and, in particular, its paragraph 2.

6. On 30 June 1997, the Chairman of the Commission, in a letter to the Secretary-General, indicated that its members, at a meeting held on 13 June 1997, had taken the following decisions:

(a) The Commission noted that the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations had interpreted paragraph 2 of resolution 51/129 as meaning that the data should be stored electronically. It also noted that the Division for Palestinian Rights would be prepared to take care of that task. It further noted that the Chairman of the Fourth Committee had indicated that resolution 51/129 had no financial implications;

(b) The Commission was of the opinion that the proposed operation should be carried out within the Archives and Records Management Section of the Office of Conference and Support Services;

(c) The Commission also believed that the operation should be financed by the Division for Palestinian Rights inasmuch as that Division appeared to have offered to do so.

7. In reply to the above letter, on 5 August 1997, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs addressed a letter to the Chairman, requesting that the Commission authorize the Division for Palestinian Rights to have access to the records in question for the purpose of undertaking a preliminary assessment of the resources that would be needed if the Division were to assist in the implementation of the mandate.

8. In response, the Chairman of the Commission indicated in his letter dated 10 September 1997 that the members had agreed to authorize a designated delegation from the Division for Palestinian Rights to have access to the land records at the United Nations Archives for a cost-estimate of the project to modernize the records in accordance with the terms stated in the letter dated 30 June 1997.

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Maintenance of International Security

Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/80 B of 12 December 1995, entitled "Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States". In that resolution the Assembly called upon all Balkan States to endeavour to promote good-neighbourly relations and continually to undertake unilateral and joint activities, particularly confidence-building measures as appropriate, in particular within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; emphasized the importance for all Balkan States to promote mutual cooperation in all fields; and urged the normalization of relations among all States of the Balkan region.

2. The General Assembly furthermore requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek the views of the Member States, particularly those from the Balkan region, and of international organizations, as well as competent organs of the United Nations, on the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region and on measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at the fifty-second session.

3. In accordance with the above request, the Secretariat addressed on 8 May 1997, notes verbales requesting relevant information from Member States, international organizations and competent organs of the Organization. The replies received as of 8 August 1997 are reproduced in section II of the present report. Replies received subsequent to that date will appear in addenda to the present report.

4. On 26 June 1997, the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed a letter to the Secretary-General, drawing attention to the Thessaloniki Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans, adopted at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of countries of south-eastern Europe, held at Thessaloniki, Greece, on 9 and 10 June 1997. The Declaration was circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council under the symbol A/52/217-S/1997/507 on 1 July 1997.

II. Replies received from Governments

France

[Original: French]

[22 July 1997]

1. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 50/80 B on the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States, adopted by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the initiative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which "requests the Secretary General to continue to seek the views of the Member States, particularly those from the Balkan region, and of international organizations, as well as of competent organs of the United Nations, on the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region and on measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000", France wishes to transmit the following views to the Secretary-General:

2. France is convinced that the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States and their close involvement in cooperation arrangements on the European continent cannot but help to stabilize the region and bring it closer to the rest of Europe.

3. France notes with satisfaction that, in paragraph 3 of resolution 50/80 B, the General Assembly "calls upon all Balkan States to endeavour to promote good-neighbourly relations and continually to undertake unilateral and joint activities, particularly confidence-building measures as appropriate, in particular within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE).

4. The Royaumont process initiated by France in connection with the Peace Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina held in Paris in December 1995 is an important element in establishing stability and lasting good-neighbourly relations in south-eastern Europe. The Royaumont approach draws its inspiration from the Stability Pact in Europe adopted at Paris in March 1995. It is intended that this approach should be integrated into OSCE, the depositary of the Stability Pact, and should take the form of a regional forum for the strengthening of stability, good-neighbourliness and cooperation in south-eastern Europe at which all the States of the region would be represented on an equal footing.

5. The central element of this process is the need for a joint and ongoing effort. The avenues to be explored include the gradual improvement or restoration of dialogue and trust,

the prevention of tensions and crises, and the promotion of reconciliation, regional cooperation, economic reconstruction and good-neighbourliness. The process is a long-term one which supplements the arms control and security provisions included in the peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

6. In this regard, France welcomes the fact that periodic Balkan ministerial conferences were resumed in 1996. This forum, which was held most recently in Thessaloniki in June 1997, provides a channel that enables the countries most directly affected to respond to the Royaumont initiative.

Italy

[Original: English]

[1 July 1997]

1. From the start of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, Italy has spared no effort in promoting a peaceful and lasting solution that would benefit the entire Balkan region, in the framework of the peace initiatives of the European Union. As a bilateral donor and through the European Union's assistance efforts, Italy has been among the main contributors in efforts to relieve the terrible suffering of the civilian population.

2. The Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina signed in Paris on 14 December 1995 and the Erdut agreement on Eastern Slavonia have created a true opportunity for stabilizing and rehabilitating the whole Balkan area. Signs of a return to normalcy have already emerged, such as elections in countries ravaged by war only a few months earlier. Steps have also been taken towards normalizing relations between these countries.

3. The peace agreements also provide mechanisms to control and reduce the level of armaments. Such provisions are fundamental to stability in the Balkans, where the level of armaments had increased tremendously in recent years. While considerable progress has been made towards implementing the two stabilization agreements reached under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a great deal remains to be done.

4. The future of Europe is inextricably linked to developments in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Political and economic stability in this area is essential to the stability and prosperity of the whole continent. This is the region where the stakes are highest in the attempt to forge a new European security.

5. In this context, Italy has preferred an integrated approach, as reflected in positive bilateral relations and in the forms of regional cooperation. The Central European Initiative, for example, has become an effective framework for regional cooperation in Europe today, with an area of collaboration that extends from the Adriatic to the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.

6. In the context of broader cooperation in the European region, the political and economic reality of the Balkans requires the international community's solidarity and responsibility, for the Balkan region is an integral part of the new post-bipolar Europe.

7. In this perspective, Italy is shouldering its share of the responsibilities. It has made a strong, ongoing commitment to Bosnia and to fostering the transition to democracy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Italy has also taken the lead by sending the multinational protection force to Albania, in order to assist the country during this critical phase, and taken the initiative of coordinating international efforts for the economic and social rehabilitation of the country, which will shortly lead to a donor's conference. The Albanian situation, like the Bosnian conflict before it, demonstrates the need for the full involvement of OSCE, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Western European Union (WEU) in the global management of the Balkan crises. The foundations must be laid for a long-term security and integration process that will prevent local crises and assure long-term stability to the area. Europe must thus be fully involved in the Balkan region, to prevent it from remaining a source of instability on the threshold of the third millennium.

8. In working on these goals, we must not neglect respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, which continues to be a source of potential conflicts. Finally, the international community is ready and willing to assist countries in the region, particularly those most devastated by war, on the condition that their authorities demonstrate that they are willing to meet fully the obligations that they freely undersigned in the peace agreements.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

[Original: English]

[25 August 1997]

1.1 The specific experience in the development of the Republic of Macedonia has greatly influenced the character of the basic commitments and principles in its foreign policy: openness and readiness for cooperation and

development of good-neighbourly relations with all neighbouring countries based on mutual respect and equal rights of all nations; respect for the inviolability of the existing international borders and territorial integrity of the States; political dialogue as a means for solving problems; respect for the human rights of persons belonging to national minorities in accordance with international law; integration in the European institutions and consistent observance of the established European standards in the relations among countries in the region, as defined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter for a New Europe, with firm determination and activities with a view towards the Balkans becoming not only geographically, but essentially an integral part of Europe.

1.2 In this respect, the Republic of Macedonia regards good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan countries as an essential precondition for preventing new crises and wars while the Europeanization of the Balkans and the securing of sustainable development should be in the interest not only of the Balkan countries, but of all the other European countries and of the international community as well. The entire Republic of Macedonia, as a concrete contribution to that end, initiated the adoption of resolutions at the forty-eighth (resolution 48/84 B), fiftieth (resolution 50/80 B) and fifty-first (resolution 51/55) sessions of the United Nations General Assembly which were sponsored by a large number of countries, including the States members of the European Union (EU).

1.3 Resolutions 48/84 B and 50/80 B on the development of good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States, as texts of essential importance for the realization of the goal of creating a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000, outline the unilateral as well as the joint activities that the Balkan States should undertake in the field of security, particularly by developing confidence-building measures.

1.4 At the same time, in view of the interdependence of regional security and the development of regional economic cooperation and the democratic transformation of the region, in the above-mentioned resolutions, the Balkan States are called upon particularly to promote their cooperation in the field of trade, as well as their cooperation in the field of transport, telecommunications and environmental protection. They are also called upon to work on the promotion of the democratic processes, the observance of human rights and cultural cooperation as well as on the promotion of cooperation among themselves in other fields of their mutual relations. These aims shall be accomplished to a great extent with the involvement of the international organizations, especially of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the international financial organizations, as well as of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and EU, which in the forthcoming period shall represent conditions sine qua non for the successful democratic transformation of the region. Also, an exceptional contribution to that effect is expected to be made by the re-established dialogue among the Balkan States themselves, which, considering their commitments and efforts, is proving to be an ambitious and encouraging process.

1.5 The initiatives for the development of good-neighbourly relations in the wider region of south-eastern Europe, such as the Royaumont Initiative, and the South-east European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), which were launched in the post-Dayton period, are of great importance and complementary to resolutions 48/84 B and 50/80 B. They should be seen as a part of the international effort to turn the Balkans into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation by the year 2000.

1.6 The Republic of Macedonia, aware of the importance of the regional component of arms control and disarmament, as well as of the confidence- and security-building measures, urges the commencement of negotiations which should result in a regional agreement on these issues. Such an agreement should rest upon the spirit and principles of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (the CFE Treaty) and the CFE-1A agreements, as well as on the OSCE 1992 and 1994 Vienna Documents. The Republic of Macedonia is willing to host such negotiations and be a depository State for that agreement.

1.7 Considering its own commitment to full integration in the European structures, and desirous of contributing to strengthening peace in the Balkans and cooperation among the States of the region, as well as to its substantial integration in Europe, while bearing in mind the political, economic and social conditions currently prevailing in it, the Republic of Macedonia is committed to cooperating, to the greatest possible extent, with its neighbours, as well as other States, in all fields. Consequently, it supports all initiatives that lead to strengthening peace, security and cooperation in the region and beyond, such as the Royaumont Initiative and SECI, the inter-Balkan process initiated by the Sofia Declaration of 1996, as well as the Central European Initiative and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The Republic of Macedonia makes a positive contribution in participating in all of these.

2.1 The Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in its previous information (A/50/412, paras. 57-75) submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/84 B,

proposed to the Secretary -General to undertake an initiative for "an Agenda on the Europeanization of the Balkans". The Secretary-General was expected to prepare a special report on the region, as a basis for a programme whose implementation could result in a "model for modern, European good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States". Before being considered and adopted/noted by the General Assembly, it could be discussed within a special forum, organized by the Secretary-General or by a Balkan State interested in hosting such a meeting; the presence of well-known experts in this field would be desirable. The Republic of Macedonia has indicated to the Secretary-General its willingness to hold such a forum in 1997.

2.2 In the period after the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/80 B, the Republic of Macedonia negotiated and concluded two very important agreements on good-neighbourly and friendly relations and cooperation, with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and with the Republic of Greece. Those agreements have decreased the risks of spilling over of the war in the southern Balkans and have had a positive effect on the overall situation in the region.

3.1 In the midst of such a volatile situation in the region, the forces of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), deployed along the northern and western borders, have played a very important positive role. The importance of their presence in the region has derived not so much from their military strength, but rather from the fact that they represented a symbol of the serious concern of the United Nations and its determination to prevent the spillover of the war. This concrete engagement in the realization of the basic provision of the Charter of the United Nations — strengthening and maintaining international peace and security — marked the beginning, and provided a powerful incentive for, the further development of preventive diplomacy. The regional importance of this successful United Nations peacekeeping mission became obvious during the crisis in the Republic of Albania, which still raises concerns. The success story of this preventive mission of the United Nations has been recognized by the international community.

3.2 In the period after the adoption of the resolution 50/80 B, certain results have been achieved in accordance with the requests contained in the resolution. With the assistance of the international community, that is to say, its most responsible elements, the halt in the war conflicts resulted in the signing of the Dayton Agreement. This Agreement, perhaps reached belatedly, nevertheless made the belligerents accept the norms of civilized behaviour. At the same time, the Agreement made it possible to put an end to the armed conflicts and gave the sides involved the chance to behave in accordance with the principles and aims of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It has established relations among the parties as equals and restored international political values and obligations in the whole region. The obligations under the Agreement are firm and must be fully observed. The future legitimacy of the parties involved will very much depend upon the implementation of the Agreement. The slow implementation of the provisions of the Agreement thus far could lend justification to the existing concerns.

3.3 With regard to the current situation in the Balkans, the efforts of several south-eastern European States, initiated by the 1996 Sofia Declaration, give rise to hope for improvement of the situation. At the most recent meeting, held at Thessaloniki on 9 to 10 June 1997, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs firmly committed themselves to strengthening stability and good-neighbourly relations in the region. They reaffirmed all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. They also underlined their commitment to furthering the development of civil society, based on democratic foundations, as a constituent part of their overall social, economic and political development. The highest aim in their common belief is the human dimension of this joint initiative, which, as a continuing process, through comprehensive cooperation, should provide rapid economic development and prosperity to the peoples of the region. Liberalization of trade and joint infrastructure projects would enable the future interlinking and interdependence of production and consequently would bring people and their basic interests closer. This, in due course, will increase the commonality of production and commercial relations, and will bring together nations that have had diverging political attitudes and positions in their mutual relations. In accordance with the Thessaloniki Declaration, this is the only way to fulfil the conditions for joining the European Union, which is in the ultimate interests of the States of the region.

3.4 It should be underlined that at the Thessaloniki Conference the atmosphere was more relaxed than it had been in a long time. This was a result of the timely preparations and excellent organization of the Conference by the Government of Greece. The delegation of the Republic of Macedonia strove to give its utmost contribution to the successful completion of the work of the Conference. It is very important that the Balkan States, by that initiative, have become influential and credible actors for the development of mutual relations and the improvement of cooperation in the Balkan region. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the Conference considered the Royaumont and the South-east European Cooperative

initiatives to be complementary and supports close cooperation and coordination with the Central European Initiative and the Black Sea Economic cooperation.

3.5 There is hope that all participants in the Conference will sincerely implement what they have declared. The Thessaloniki initiatives will be successful if they are pursued in the common interest of all the Balkan nations and in conditions of mutual respect and if local concerns and non-Balkan interests are avoided.

3.6 The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is against the establishment of any restricted regional associations among the Balkan States which are aimed at the development of the Balkan economic and political integration outside of the European Union. It considers that such efforts could isolate the Balkan countries from the European integration processes, which can have a negative impact on the societies and the Balkan peoples in the region.

3.7 If supported by the developed non-Balkan States, the Thessaloniki initiative could bring the region closer to the desired situation by the year 2000, that is, the goal of resolutions 48/84 B and 50/80 B, that the Balkans should become a zone of peace, security, good-neighbourliness and cooperation.

3.8 The Republic of Macedonia expects the General Assembly to call upon all States in the region, by their own efforts, to contribute to the achievement of the above-mentioned goal. In doing so, their major individual contribution could be if, in their mutual relations and while taking part in the various initiatives, they primarily concentrated on promoting and developing solutions for issues that are in their common interest. At the same time, we attach great importance to an appeal to the key donor countries to implement the assistance to the countries of the region, by which they will be contributing to the stability of each individual country as well as to that of the region as a whole.

3.9 A serious approach to the issue of the development of good-neighbourliness by the United Nations, taking into consideration the micro-specificity of the region, might lead towards the construction of a model to be offered as a basis for further consideration and application in other parts of the world as well.

4.1 The present economic and political situation in the Balkans is geared towards the transformation of the societies towards a market economy and towards systems based on parliamentary democracy. This will require greater sacrifices, but this should be seen as a process in which the societies will be based on sound foundations. By continuing those efforts and especially by mutual cooperation, the Balkan nations will, it is to be hoped, manage to emerge from the current *circulus vitiosus*. This new policy should be supported by the influential political and economic powers and elements.

4.2 The transition of the Balkan nations will be a difficult process which the Balkan nations will have to carry out by themselves. Their social and economic development will face a number of obstacles, the greatest one being the establishment of a new value system. It is important to continue the efforts to prevent new conflicts in the Balkans, to resolve the present ones, to assist the process of transition and to enter a period of development, democratization, respect of human rights and the rule of law.

4.3 The acceptance and observance of the aforementioned goals and values is a necessity for the further development of the Europeanization of the Balkans. The full integration of the Balkan nations in the European Union should be seen as a historic necessity which should be supported and not delayed. The observance of the European norms and standards will aid in the attainment of the basic interests and needs of all Balkan nations and will help their progress in the future.

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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 13 December 1996, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/151, in which it took note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (A/51/386) and of his efforts to strengthen that cooperation and to implement the relevant resolutions, and noted with appreciation the continued and increasing participation of OAU in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and its constructive contribution to that work. In the same resolution, the Assembly called upon United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, to continue to involve OAU closely in all their activities concerning Africa and to cooperate with OAU in the pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa, as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations; requested the convening of a follow-up meeting in 1997, in Addis Ababa, to review and evaluate the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon at the 1995 meeting and to adopt new and effective joint action; and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the resolution and on the development of cooperation between OAU and the organizations of the United Nations system.

II. Consultations and exchange of information

2. The Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU cooperate in a number of areas and consult regularly on key African questions with a view to coordinating initiatives and action. Since January 1997 in particular, they have discussed the need to build closer ties with a view to enhancing their mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa and for coordinating their efforts in that regard. They took an important step in that connection when they appointed Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun as joint United Nations-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region and subsequently agreed to expand his mandate to include the Congo. In January 1997, they agreed to meet twice a year, along with their senior advisers, to discuss priority areas of cooperation and to coordinate their efforts. Subsequently they reached an understanding that the meetings would take place immediately following the annual Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU and early during the annual session of the General Assembly.

3. The first such meeting between the two Secretaries-General and their advisers was held at Harare on 3 June 1997 during the OAU summit. At the suggestion of the United Nations Secretary-General, the meeting was devoted to preventive action and peacemaking as well as peace-building, but also included, at the request of the OAU Secretary-General, cooperation in the democratization process in Africa, especially in election monitoring, as well as in strengthening the liaison between the two secretariats.

4. A follow-up meeting, chaired by the United Nations and OAU heads of political affairs, was held at Harare on 5 June to identify specific steps that could be taken to strengthen and broaden further cooperation between the two secretariats and to agree on the agenda, participation and venue of the meeting of the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU during 1997. The meeting is to be convened at Addis Ababa in early December 1997.

III. Cooperation in the areas of peace and security

A. Department of Political Affairs

5. The United Nations Department of Political Affairs cooperates with OAU at various levels and in different ways. It organizes meetings with members of the Africa Group in New York to brief them on priority issues of common concern and to exchange ideas and information. It is making arrangements to ensure that such briefings and idea exchanges are undertaken regularly in order to address issues of concern expeditiously and to facilitate any follow-up that may be required.

6. There are also ongoing contacts and consultation between the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the OAU Permanent Observer. Such coordination and exchange of information between secretariats is deemed vital to the effort to strengthen and rationalize United Nations-OAU cooperation. To that end, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the Permanent Observer have agreed to hold monthly meetings to exchange information and to facilitate the coordination of actions and initiatives.

7. The Department of Political Affairs has initiated a staff exchange programme with OAU to train and familiarize staff with each organization's procedures and practices and to improve cooperation and coordination. The focal point of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security was invited by the Department of Political Affairs to Headquarters in

September 1997 on a familiarization visit. The Department has also invited the OAU Conflict Prevention Division to send staff members to New York for familiarization visits and has offered to reciprocate. Furthermore, it has extended a similar invitation to the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and will gradually extend this activity to other subregional organizations.

8. The Department has proposed the establishment of a liaison office at OAU in the context of its 1998-1999 programme budget in order to strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and OAU. The office will, among other things, help to facilitate the exchange of information and the coordination of initiatives and efforts in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as well as in the democratization and peace-building processes in Africa, and will coordinate the implementation of programmes of cooperation between the United Nations system and OAU that were agreed to at the annual meetings of their secretariats.

9. The Department provides OAU with information on electoral assistance and democratic transition activities and has offered to organize training programmes for its staff on those areas. OAU is a member of the Electoral Assistance Information Network, established in October 1992 and coordinated by the Department. A senior staff member of the Electoral Assistance Division visited OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa in July 1997 and discussed ways and means of strengthening cooperation in the democratization process in Africa and the support and assistance that the United Nations could provide to OAU in that area.

B. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

10. As proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report of 1 November 1995 on improving preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa (A/50/711), a United Nations technical mission visited Addis Ababa in August 1997 to discuss how the United Nations could best help the OAU secretariat to operationalize the situation room in its conflict management centre so as to enhance its capabilities in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

11. In that context, the Secretary-General also kept in close contact with the Secretary-General of OAU to exchange views on an initiative proposed by France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, aimed at strengthening, under the auspices of the United Nations and OAU, African capacity for peacekeeping on the continent and elsewhere. Following a round of initial consultations with African and donor States at Headquarters, on the margins of the OAU summit at Harare and in several other capitals, the three countries held further discussions with the United Nations and OAU secretariats on steps that could be taken to move the project forward, in close consultation and coordination with the United Nations and OAU and with the participation of all African countries.

C. Centre for Human Rights

12. The representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights met the Secretary-General of OAU during the twentieth regular session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Mauritius, October 1996) to confirm that, in the framework of cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and OAU, a training course for directors of military academies in African countries would be jointly organized in Addis Ababa, and that joint training programmes might be set up on human rights, democracy and the rule of law for members of the armed forces for the five African subregions. The training programme, which is to be launched in 1997, will last for 12 months.

13. As part of its training programme for the armed forces, the Centre organized, in June 1996 at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Turin, Italy, a training course for senior military instructors from the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. Thirty-two instructors from five of those countries participated in the training course. On that occasion, a senior officer in the executive office of the Secretary-General of OAU submitted, at the Centre's request, a number of documents on questions relating to mechanisms for conflict resolution and human rights promotion and protection in Africa.

IV. Cooperation in the field of economic and social development

A. Economic Commission for Africa

14. An important framework used by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in its cooperation with OAU is the OAU/African Development Bank (ADB)/ECA joint secretariat created by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government to enable the three African organizations

to work together for the establishment of an African Economic Community (AEC). In June 1996 the joint secretariat met with the regional economic communities to prepare for the 7th consultative meeting of the heads of OAU, ECA and ADB with the regional economic communities, and the first session of the OAU/AEC/ Economic and Social Council meeting and the AEC summit. ECA, in July and August 1997, participated in a mission of the joint secretariat to the regional economic communities with a view to identifying areas in which they need to be strengthened.

15. Within the framework of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), ECA and OAU, along with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), have undertaken activities to assist AMCEN in implementing its programme of work. In that regard, both organizations deployed collaborative efforts to consolidate the status of AMCEN and to promote the implementation of various conventions such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. In addition, an African Common Position for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama, Japan, 23-27 May 1994) was prepared jointly and forwarded to the Conference through AMCEN.

16. ECA cooperated closely with OAU in the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996) and during the Conference itself. Both organizations assisted African countries in preparing the Declaration on the African Common Position presented at the Conference. Consultative meetings on a number of issues were jointly organized for the African Group during the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994); study tours were jointly undertaken to a selected number of countries to exchange views and experiences among African countries; and both organizations organized and serviced meetings of the African Population Commission and undertook follow-up activities.

17. ECA has collaborated with OAU in various meetings and seminars organized in the following areas: domestic mobilization of financial resources for the development of Africa; the role of African workers and trade unions in subregional and regional economic integration; the mobilization of resources and public awareness for refugees in Africa; trade policies and World Trade Organization negotiations; future relations between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union; and globalization, development and international labour standards. ECA and OAU are also working jointly on the protocol on science and technology to be annexed to the Abuja Treaty establishing AEC.

B. United Nations Children's Fund

18. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has worked closely with OAU in efforts to create an enabling environment for the pursuit of an "anti-war agenda". It has provided technical assistance to OAU and its subregional organizations in planning conflict resolution activities and strengthening continent-wide efforts to ensure the survival, protection and development of children by helping to build, at regional levels, consensus for child-friendly human development.

19. UNICEF worked with OAU counterparts to ensure a total ban on landmines in Africa. A joint report on the impact of landmines on the continent was developed and submitted to the OAU Council of Ministers and the summit meeting in Harare in June, which adopted a decision on the matter. The outcome of a UNICEF workshop on child-soldiering, which was attended by OAU, was submitted to the Summit of African First Ladies (Abuja, April 1997). As a result of joint action by OAU and UNICEF, the OAU summit adopted a declaration by the African First Ladies banning child-soldiering and called upon the international community to consider it a war crime.

20. A joint OAU/World Health Organization (WHO)/ILO/UNICEF seminar on the protection of the child and the elimination of child labour in Africa was held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in March and April 1997. The recommendations of the seminar were adopted at the twentieth session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission. The report of the Commission was endorsed at the OAU summit in June, as were the recommendations of the Arusha seminar, which are to be submitted as the African Common Position at the Conference on Child Labour to be held at Oslo in October 1997. The Commission has also proposed that 1998 be proclaimed the African Year of Child Protection and is expected to review the initiative at its twenty-first session.

21. In September 1996 in Kampala, UNICEF supported the organization of a conference on the education of women and girls in collaboration with the Government of Uganda. The conference, in which 35 countries participated, proposed a programme of action for improving girls' access to school and women's literacy. UNICEF collaborated in the organization of the pan-African conference on the participation of youth in peace and development, which took

place in Addis Ababa and funded the participation of African youth in the conference. UNICEF developed and presented a paper on girls' contribution to peace and development at the conference. On 16 June 1997, in Addis Ababa, UNICEF, in collaboration with OAU, organized the Day of the African Child. UNICEF is currently working with OAU on preparations for the launching of the African Decade for Education in September 1997 and on the Conference of African Ministers of Education in April 1998.

22. As a follow-up to the OAU International Conference on Assistance to African Children (Dakar, 25-27 November 1992) and the implementation of both of the Consensus of Dakar adopted at the Conference and the relevant resolution of the OAU Council of Ministers, OAU and UNICEF continue to work towards the control of deficiencies in micronutrients such as iodine, vitamin A and iron in Africa. In March 1997, OAU member States were requested to respond to a questionnaire that will furnish important information that OAU needs to promote intercountry collaboration and advocacy in this important programme area.

C. United Nations Development Programme

23. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support to OAU under a programme entitled "Promotion of Africa's economic cooperation and integration through the establishment of the African Economic Community". The $2,619,000 programme is aimed at supporting the efforts of OAU member States in promoting economic cooperation and integration to achieve self-sustaining economic development.

24. A $3 million, three-year project, entitled "Capacity-building for the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution", was approved on 9 May 1997. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the operational capacity of the mechanism. The project has three main components: capacity-building in preventive diplomacy, capacity-building for resource mobilization and human resources capacity-building in the conflict management division.

25. UNDP assistance is also focused on establishing an effective early warning system within the OAU Conflict Management Division. This includes training sessions for the officers of the Division in appropriate information analysis methodologies and in the preparation of regular reports, briefings and background materials on impending conflict situations. UNDP will finance in-house training workshops for the staff of the Division in the areas of conflict analysis and resolution, military strategy and project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, training sessions for the electoral monitors of OAU will be conducted, and peace missions to areas of potential conflict will be undertaken.

26. UNDP will commission a study to develop strategies to mobilize resources and will finance training sessions for the staff of the OAU secretariat based on a new resource mobilization strategy. Fund-raising campaigns and donor conferences are also planned to increase the financial resources of the OAU Peace Fund.

D. United Nations Environment Programme

27. As a follow-up to the decisions of AMCEN at its sixth session, UNEP, ECA and OAU organized the ninth meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN in December 1996. The meeting provided a framework for consultations among African Governments as well as the review of issues that were considered at the nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi, 27 January-7 February 1997).

28. The meeting also recommended the organization in March 1997 of a pan-African conference on environment and development to review the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the follow-up in Africa on the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The pan-African conference was convened under the auspices of OAU and jointly organized by the interim secretariat of the Convention, UNEP and the UNDP Office to Combat Desertification and Drought. The report of the Conference was endorsed by the OAU Council of Ministers at its sixty-sixth ordinary session in May 1997.

E. United Nations Population Fund

29. The assistance provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to OAU started in 1984, focusing on assisting member States to adopt and implement population policies and programmes. That assistance was expanded in 1994 to include the implementation of the Dakar-Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development of the Third African Population Conference (Dakar, 11 and 12 December 1992), as well as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. With UNFPA assistance,

greater collaboration was developed among OAU, ECA and ADB to create a joint secretariat for the African Population Commission, which was established by OAU to address issues related to socio-economic development in Africa.

30. Under the terms of the four-year programme agreement between UNFPA and OAU, the following major activities were carried out: the African conference on the empowerment of women through functional literacy and the education of the girl-child, convened jointly by OAU and the Government of Uganda (Kampala, September 1996); study tours of African Population Commission members to Cameroon, Egypt, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe, organized by OAU; a study on the consequences of rapid population growth and conflicts: a case study of Kenya, commissioned by OAU; and the second meeting of the follow-up committee for the implementation of the Dakar-Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, organized by OAU (Addis Ababa, June 1997).

F. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

31. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) assisted the OAU secretariat in drafting the Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control and Illicit Drug Trafficking in Africa, which was adopted by OAU at its summit in July 1996. UNDCP supported the OAU secretariat in the implementation of the Plan of Action through a technical cooperation project to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to discharge its role as a catalyst in this respect.

32. UNDCP participated in the twentieth ordinary session of the OAU Labour and Social Commission (Addis Ababa, April 1997) and the thirty-third Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU (Harare, 2-4 June 1997). To promote implementation of the Plan of Action and support from the donor community, UNDCP made a presentation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the current drug situation in Africa and the efforts being made by the Programme to promote joint action to counter the problem in Africa. The OAU Council of Ministers in May 1997 endorsed four recommendations directly related to drug control, calling for strengthening of cooperation between OAU and UNDCP.

G. World Food Programme

33. In 1996, the operational expenditures of the World Food Programme (WFP) in OAU member States amounted to $553,322,000. The highest priority was given to sub-Saharan African countries, which received 52 per cent of total WFP assistance. Emergency relief continued to be the primary form of WFP assistance to Africa, with 70 per cent of the Programme's total relief assistance going to sub-Saharan Africa. Relief assistance exceeded $434,568,000 in 1996. More than half of that amount, $256,564,000, was channelled towards helping the victims of man-made disasters, while $20,200,000 was provided to areas stricken by drought and crop failure. Some $178,004,000 was provided to protracted refugee and displaced person operations.

34. In addition, WFP continued to provide development assistance to the region in accordance with the priority sectors identified by OAU and in line with the mission statement of WFP. In 1996, 6 million chronically hungry people received food through 80 WFP-assisted development projects in 37 African countries. WFP assistance for human resources development totalled $65 million, and included in-school feeding at the primary and secondary levels, technical and vocational training and institutional feeding centres. A total of $25 million was spent on agricultural and rural development activities throughout Africa. Moreover, WFP purchased 385,000 metric tons of food commodities in sub-Saharan Africa in 1996 at a total cost of $98.7 million.

35. The WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Project played an important role in directing the WFP disaster mitigation activities and targeting food assistance to the most vulnerable and food-insecure beneficiaries. There are VAM field units in Ethiopia, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania. Additional VAM units are being opened in Burkina Faso to service the Sahel, and in Uganda to service the Great Lakes region.

36. WFP is a major provider of skills and management training to local and counterpart staff in Africa. WFP trained more than 1,700 local counterpart staff in Africa last year and continued to emphasize training activities in areas such as project identification and implementation, monitoring and reporting and food storage and management. In its effort to increase the role of women, WFP has initiated gender activities for both development and relief projects in African countries.

H. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

37. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) continued to collaborate with OAU in the implementation of a joint project aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the OAU secretariat in the human settlements field as well as in areas of natural disaster prevention, reduction and response. The project entered its last phase in February 1997 and will end in November 1997.

38. Cooperation between the Centre and OAU was strengthened during the sixteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, which represents the shelter and human settlements component of the United Nation System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. OAU has also sought to further its cooperation with the Centre by identifying programme support activities for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in Africa. The proposed activities include convening in the year 2000 programme implementation review meetings of African experts and ministers responsible for human settlements, the organization of workshops on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and a proposal to establish a pan-African human settlements information system.

39. The Centre continued to work closely with OAU in formulating and implementing policies and projects related to human settlements and sustainable development through its community-based environment information system, its sustainable cities and capacity-building programmes and other programmes. In furtherance of this spirit of cooperation, the Centre was represented at and actively participated in the joint OAU/African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect Conference on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict (Addis Ababa, July 1997).

I. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

40. As a follow-up to the recommendations of last year's OAU seminar on the establishment of an early warning system, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted a two-day training programme in October 1996 on the UNHCR database, REFWORLD. Participants were staff of the OAU Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons and Humanitarian Affairs and Conflict Management. UNHCR also provided essential computer equipment to the Refugee Division.

41. UNHCR participates regularly in the meetings of the OAU Commission of Twenty on Refugees. As a follow-up to a recommendation of the Commission, a seminar was jointly organized by UNHCR and OAU on mobilizing resources and public awareness for refugees in Africa. As current chair of the OAU Coordinating Committee on Assistance to Refugees, UNHCR is leading the Committee in the ongoing review process to make it a more effective body in assisting refugees in Africa.

42. UNHCR also extended assistance and support to the missions of the OAU Commission of Twenty to visit refugee sites in eastern Africa and the Great Lakes region in December 1996 and May 1997 respectively. As a result of the mission to Ethiopia, OAU granted $50,000 to UNHCR to assist Somali refugees in the eastern camps.

43. UNHCR made presentations at meetings organized by OAU in collaboration with other international organizations, such as the International Peace Academy/OAU seminar on peacemaking, as well as participating in other joint meetings, including the OAU/non-governmental organization conference on strengthening cooperation between civil society, OAU and Governments. UNHCR also participated in OAU technical meetings, including those of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group, which has been formed to prepare an OAU report on the effects of conflict on human development.

J. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

44. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided assistance in December 1996 to the OAU Scientific, Technical and Research Commission for the revival of the Inter-African Bureau of Soils Library based in Lagos. FAO and OAU also jointly organized and conducted training sessions for young scientists and managers on trypanosomiasis. Close cooperation continued with regard to the rinderpest control programme under the Emergency Prevention System.

45. FAO has also cooperated intensively with OAU in the field of plant protection, integrated pest management, the Emergency Prevention System and related activities, particularly those concerning pesticides. With financial assistance from the Netherlands, FAO has developed a series of guidelines, which have been published in four major languages and distributed to all OAU member countries. Seminars are conducted regionally and in various individual countries in Africa.

46. FAO is assisting countries that participate in the Special Programme for Food Security with data collection and dissemination and with water resources and irrigation technology transfer. Assistance is also provided to regional networks such as the Regional Association for Irrigation and Drainage in Central and Western Africa and the Technical Cooperation Network for Wetland Development and Management.

47. Since the fourth session of the Scientific, Technical and Research Commission's Inter-African Committee on Oceanography, Sea and Inland Fisheries (Pointe Noire, Congo, April 1996), OAU and FAO have agreed to coordinate the scheduling of their meetings in the future. Furthermore, the two organizations, together with UNEP, have agreed to collaborate in the implementation of the Scientific, Technical and Research Commission Pan-African Ocean Environment and Management Programme.

48. FAO continued to assist African countries in assessing the impact on domestic agricultural policies of the Uruguay Round agreement on agriculture. A round table for SADC countries was convened in early 1997, and the proceedings of the meeting will be shared with OAU as a contribution to its activities on trade and regional integration.

K. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

49. During the period under review, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and OAU held their fifth consultation meeting (Addis Ababa, January 1997), which focused on the importance of regional integration in Africa, the culture of peace and the follow-up to the recommendations of the UNESCO "Audience Africa" meeting (Paris, 6-10 February 1995). At the sectoral level, the two organizations decided to stress existing cooperation in the field of education. The regional consultation meeting, held at Dakar in March and April 1997, in preparation for the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 28 September-2 October 1998), was one of the contributions made by UNESCO to the Decade.

50. On 30 January 1997, UNESCO held a meeting at Addis Ababa to enable the ambassadors accredited to OAU and AEC to gain a better understanding, among other things, of the role of UNESCO in the programmes of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, for which it is a lead agency. UNESCO acted as facilitator in the preparation of the programme of support to educational rehabilitation in Africa, to be implemented by OAU, UNESCO and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, an Afro-American organization.

51. The UNESCO office in Addis Ababa has been strengthened, and three programme experts in education, science and technology and the culture of peace have been assigned to it. In addition, UNESCO continued to provide technical assistance to the Pan-African News Agency. This contribution has been complemented by several financial donations, to which UNESCO has decided to add an exceptional amount of $720,000 in January 1998.

L. World Health Organization

52. WHO collaboration with OAU during the period under review has covered human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), nutrition, social development, humanitarian action, malaria control and environmental health. Considerable work is being accomplished by national authorities for AIDS prevention and control in OAU member States. WHO gives technical and financial support to such national AIDS programmes following the recommendations of the Fifth Conference of African Ministers of Health, held in Cairo, and sponsored the Ninth International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa.

53. Regarding food and nutrition in the context of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (1993-2003), an inter-country workshop of the African Micronutrient Task Force for the Eastern and Southern African Regions subgroup was organized by OAU and co-sponsored by WHO in Addis Ababa. WHO, in collaboration with OAU, organized a seminar in Arusha on the Abolition and Elimination of Child Labour, from 31 March to 3 April 1997, and presented a technical paper entitled "Child labour in Africa and its impact on socio-sanitary development".

54. At their summit in June 1997, the Heads of State and Government of OAU adopted the Harare Declaration on Malaria Prevention and Control in the Context of African Economic Recovery and Development and a Plan of Action. WHO assisted in the preparation of the document at the request of the Government of Zimbabwe.

M. World Bank

55. Over the past year, the World Bank has intensified its efforts to build collaboration with OAU in pursuit of its shared goal of African development. One area of focus that

has already been identified is trade and investment in Africa. The Bank is facilitating the exploration of OAU participation, possibly in tandem with ADB and ECA, in the Investment Promotion Network of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, to promote investments in Africa.

N. International Monetary Fund

56. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided financial assistance to African countries in support of their structural adjustment programmes through the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF), the Extended Fund Facility and stand-by arrangements. As of end-June, there were 25 arrangements (including 21 ESAF arrangements) in place with OAU member countries, for a total commitment of 3.6 billion special drawing rights (SDR); the undrawn balance totalled SDR 1.4 billion. Through its catalytic role, IMF also assisted African countries in mobilizing additional resources through participation in multilateral aid coordination conferences (e.g., consultative group meetings and UNDP-sponsored round-table discussions, as well as in the context of the World Bank's Special Programme of Assistance for Africa), and through debt rescheduling in the framework of the Paris Club. Moreover, together with the World Bank, the Fund has created a framework for action to resolve the external debt problems of the heavily indebted low-income countries, including their large multilateral debt. Three African countries are among the first four cases to be considered for eligibility under that Initiative.

57. The Fund has maintained and intensified its dialogue with OAU, through direct contacts with the OAU secretariat, in the form of high-level meetings, the accreditation of a Fund representative to the OAU secretariat in Ethiopia, through participation in conferences and various forums on economic issues and as regular observers in meetings of the OAU Economic and Social Committee and at the annual meetings. The Fund is continuing to help African countries to establish the macroeconomic frameworks needed to underpin the implementation of the social and sectoral programmes carried out by other members of the United Nations system, as part of the Special Initiative on Africa, which is based on the priorities set out by the OAU Council of Ministers at its seventeenth extraordinary session (Cairo, March 1995).

O. International Fund for Agricultural Development

58. By the end of 1996, the assistance of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to SDR 1,579.22 million ($2,018.14 million) in loans and grants for 207 projects in 47 countries. Of the total project cost of $5,016.60 million, IFAD contributed 40 per cent.

59. In addition, under its Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification, IFAD, by the end of 1995, had provided SDR 284.75 million ($377.21 million) for 47 projects in 26 countries, including grants for projects of SDR 1.30 million ($9.13 million). In 1996, sub-Saharan Africa received SDR 118.65 million ($171.73 million) in assistance from IFAD for 15 projects in as many countries. Of the total project cost of $393.65 million, IFAD contributed 44 per cent.

60. Through its technical assistance grant programme supporting agricultural research and training in Africa, IFAD continued to focus on improving the technical basis of its investment portfolio. IFAD projects are increasingly located in resource-poor areas with marginal ecologies in which few sustainable agricultural technologies are available. IFAD has focused strongly on food crops and livestock that the rural poor have traditionally produced and consumed as well as on the development of conservation-based technologies (mainly innovative agroforestry-oriented technologies) to promote sustainable agriculture.

P. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

61. A mid-term evaluation of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002) was conducted jointly by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), OAU and ECA during the first quarter of 1997. The evaluation mission assessed the achievements of the Decade, identified and assessed critical factors that could have facilitated or impeded the achievements of the objectives and expected outputs of the programme, examined the relationship between the Decade and the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization and made recommendations regarding the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme.

62. UNIDO, OAU and ECA jointly organized the thirteenth session of the Conference of African Ministers of

Industry (Accra, May 1997). Conference participants adopted the Plan of Action on the Alliance of Africa's Industrialization, which aims at transforming African countries into newly industrialized countries, enhancing institutional capacity-building including human resource development and the integration of women in industry and mobilizing investment and technical assistance resources for the implementation of priority programmes. The Plan of Action was endorsed by the OAU Heads of State and Government at their summit in June 1997.

V. Cooperation in other areas

A. International Civil Aviation Organization

63. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) continued to support the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and provided information to ECA following the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In addition, ICAO continued to play a very active role in the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000) by contributing to the work of the Resources Mobilization Committee, which has prepared a list of projects for the Decade.

64. A close and continuous working relationship was maintained between ICAO and the African Civil Aviation Commission. ICAO provided the Commission with expert advice and secretariat assistance upon request. Documents and studies of interest to the African region were provided to OAU on a regular basis to allow it to maintain basic documentation on civil aviation matters.

B. Universal Postal Union

65. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) took concrete measures to help OAU member countries to reform their postal services into efficient and business-oriented entities. Those measures have intensified since the ministerial meeting organized by UPU in Abidjan in July 1996 to review the postal sector in African countries in the context of the new initiatives launched by the United Nations system in favour of Africa. UPU also provided assistance to certain OAU member countries faced with a post-conflict situation where vast reconstruction measures are required to be taken. UPU also proposed to OAU, for incorporation in the treaty instituting ACC, some sectoral objectives covering the development and modernization of postal services in Africa.

66. Finally, the Union, on 25 April 1997, concluded an agreement with the Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU) on the development and modernization of postal services in Africa for the period from 1997 to 1999. The agreement targets the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the implementation, in full cooperation with PAPU, of the objectives of the Maseru and Abidjan plans of action adopted by the ministers in charge of the postal sector in Africa in 1996. Under the agreement, the Union will contribute over 1 million Swiss francs, while the PAPU share will be about 153,000 Swiss francs.

C. World Meteorological Organization

67. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) established a subregional office for West Africa in Lagos in early 1997. The office will assist countries in West Africa in the identification of needs, the formulation of national and subregional projects and the mobilization of resources for their implementation. WMO has continued to participate in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

68. As part of its contribution to the humanitarian efforts in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, WMO has collaborated with the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development in the Niger and the Drought Monitoring Centre in Nairobi in providing information on both short- and medium-term weather forecasts and seasonal outlooks to the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

D. International Maritime Organization

69. In the context of its integrated technical cooperation programme, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has assisted national maritime training institutions in member States of both IMO and OAU and has supplemented their capacity-building efforts with projects at the regional and subregional levels.

E. United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

70. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs has regularly cooperated with OAU, particularly in promoting international cooperation in space activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. This process is being accomplished through regional and international meetings, training courses and workshops. A summary of these activities is contained in the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/AC.105/625).

71. The continuing cooperation between the Office and OAU has been in implementing the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. On an annual basis, member States of OAU have nominated candidates for participation in the United Nations/European Space Agency long-term fellowship programme and in United Nations international training courses and meetings of experts.